<u>IN THE CLAIMS</u>:

Please add new Claim 39, cancel Claim 35, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and amend Claims 34 and 36 to 38, as shown below.

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1. to 33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) A data input apparatus comprising:

first input means for inputting data <u>from an internal unit</u>;

second input means for inputting secret key information <u>from an external device</u> ~~stored in an external device~~;

generating means for generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

outputting means for outputting said digital signature to said external device.

35. (Cancelled)

36. (Currently Amended) A data input method comprising:

inputting data <u>from an internal unit</u> via a first input means;

inputting secret key information from an external device via a second input means~~, wherein said external device stores said secret key information~~;

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generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

outputting said digital signature to said external device.

37. (Currently Amended) Computer-executable program code stored on a computer readable medium, said computer-executable program code for use in inputting data in a computer system, the computer-executable program code comprising:

code to input data from an internal unit via a first input means;

code to input secret key information from an external device via a second input means, wherein said external device stores said secret key information;

code to generate a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

code to output said digital signature to said external device.

38. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable memory medium in which computer-executable process steps are stored, the process steps for inputting data, wherein the process steps comprise:

a first inputting step for inputting data from an internal unit via a first input means;

a second inputting step for inputting secret key information from an external device via a second input means, wherein said external device stores said secret key information;

a generating step for generating a digital signature using said data and said secret key information; and

an outputting step for outputting said digital signature to said external device.

39.   (New) A data input system comprising:

first input means for inputting data;

compressor means for compressing the data;

second input means for inputting secret key information stored in an external device;

generating means for generating a digital signature using the compressed data and the secret key information;

first outputting means for outputting the digital signature to the external device; and

second output means for outputting the input data.